

A Just God and a Savior (Isaiah 45:1–25)

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Introduction

1. Isaiah 45 demonstrates Yahweh's ability to advance His purposes to save a people for His name in spite of Judah's hardness and hypocrisy.
2. Isaiah 45:22 was the verse the Lord used in the conversion of Charles H. Spurgeon in December of 1849.
3. Isaiah 45 is the Romans 9 of the Old Testament, developing the doctrine of the sovereignty of God in salvation.
 - a. The question behind both texts is the same: What about Israel in her hardness and unbelief and God's promise to Abraham? Compare Isaiah 45:4 with Romans 9:13.
 - b. The development of God's right is the same: The Creator extends or withholds mercy based on His sovereign will alone (Romans 9:15, 16). Compare Isaiah 45:21 with Romans 9:14.
 - c. The development of the argument is the same:
 - 1) Using Gentile rulers to advance His purpose: Compare Isaiah 45:1, 3 with Romans 9:17.
 - 2) The response of sinful humans to His sovereign work: Compare Isaiah 45:9 with Romans 9:20.
 - 3) The inclusion of Gentiles in His remnant people: Compare Isaiah 45: 22, 23 with Romans 9: 26–28.
4. Isaiah 45 is a prophetic vision of the gospel age under the true Messiah.

The chapter largely treats the work of the Lord in the establishment and decree of Cyrus the Persian to restore Judah and rebuild Jerusalem. However, the typical "near/far" prophetic connotation points to the Messianic era and the salvation of true Israel (both the Jewish remnant and the Gentiles who are called by His name. See Isaiah 43:7, quoted in Acts 15:17).

I. God's Will Performed (vv. 1–13)

1. God's sovereign right demonstrated (vv. 1–4)
 - a. God sovereign program explained—His *anointed* (v. 1)
 - b. God's sovereign purpose declared (v. 4)
2. God's sovereign power proven (vv. 5–8)
 - a. The declaration (vv. 5–7)—"*I am the LORD, who does all these things.*"

The phrase, "*though you do not know me,*" seems to indicate that Cyrus had no understanding of the Lord's part in his kingdom. However, Cyrus did acknowledge the Lord in Ezra 1:2–4. It is better to understand "*not know me*" in terms of salvation. Cyrus acknowledged that the Lord lead him to restore Judah and rebuild the city and temple, but he did not know Yahweh savingly.

- b. The illustration (v. 8)

Showers from heaven enable the fertile earth to bear fruit. Sovereign mercies from heaven shower barren and dead sinners and cause them to come alive and bear the fruit of righteousness and salvation. *“I the LORD have created it.”*

3. God’s sovereignty resisted (vv. 9–13)

Israel is hard and rebellious, refusing to acknowledge the Lord’s right among them. They bow the knee, but not to Yahweh. They offered worship to false gods and leaned on false prophets for guidance. In spite of her querulous ways, Yahweh’s determined end proceeds with certainty. Cyrus will accomplish His aims: *“He shall build my city and set the exiles free, not for price or reward, says the LORD of hosts”* (v. 13).

II. God’s Salvation Accomplished (vv. 14–25)

1. The certainty of salvation revealed in response (vv. 14–17)

a. Gentiles converted (v. 14)

b. The source of salvation hidden but evident (vv. 15–17)

The Lord, who hides Himself, saves with certain and everlasting salvation. None of those He saves will ever be put to shame or confounded!

2. The certainty of salvation announced in word (vv. 18–21)

a. As seen in creation (v. 18)

The salvation that He brings is like the world He created: it is real and practical, not just for vanity and show.

b. As expressed in words of truth (v. 19)

While the Lord may hide Himself, He clearly speaks truth and right in His Word. No one who seeks Him will ever be put to shame.

c. As compared to the futile hope of false gods (vv. 20, 21)

3. The invitation to salvation extended (vv. 22–25)

a. The free offer of the gospel announced—*“Turn and look”* (v. 22).

b. The certainty of the end expressed—*“To me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear allegiance”* (v. 23).

This does not mean that everyone will be saved, but the day is coming when all will bow the knee to the Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 14:10–12).

c. The solid foundation of hope—*“Only in the Lord”* (vv. 24, 25).